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Programme planning

Proposed strategic framework for the period 2012-2013

Part two: biennial programme plan

Programme 21
Palestine refugees

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Overall orientation

21.1 The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) was established within the United Nations system as a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly by the Assembly in its resolution 302 (IV), under which UNRWA derives its mandate to provide assistance to Palestine refugees. Since starting operations in 1950, UNRWA has adapted and enhanced its programmes to meet the increasingly complex needs of refugees and to provide them with a measure of protection and stability amid chronic conflict in the region, within available resources. It stands ready to continue to do so during the biennium 2012-2013 in accordance with the triennial mandate it receives from the Assembly.

21.2 UNRWA reports directly to the General Assembly. Overall advice and support to the Commissioner-General regarding UNRWA programmes and activities are provided by the 23-member Advisory Commission, which includes representatives of the Agency's major donors and host Governments. In its resolution 3331 B (XXIX), the Assembly decided that, with effect from 1 January 1975, the expenses for salaries of international staff in the service of UNRWA, which would otherwise have been charged to voluntary contributions, should be financed by the regular budget of the United Nations for the duration of the Agency's mandate.

21.3 The mission of UNRWA is to help Palestine refugees achieve their full potential in human development under the difficult circumstances in which they live, consistent with internationally agreed goals and standards.

21.4 During the biennium 2012-2013, UNRWA seeks to further strengthen its management and service delivery, focusing on prioritizing service quality, access to and coverage of refugees most in need. As part of its new planning approach, the Agency has identified three human development goals: a long and healthy life; acquired knowledge and skills; and a decent standard of living. Progress towards these goals will be the focus of the Agency's medium-term strategy 2010-2015 and will drive its operations during the biennium 2012-2013. The UNRWA biennial plan for the period 2012-2013 is presented within the framework of these goals and is consistent with the Agency's medium-term strategy.

21.5 Under the three goals, UNRWA aims to achieve its objectives by maintaining and improving the provision of education and health services, relief and social support, and microfinance services for the benefit of registered Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, a population that is projected to reach 5 million by 2012.

21.6 Since 2000, the Agency has provided emergency assistance to refugees in acute distress within its areas of operations as a result of armed conflict, including military operations, humanitarian access restrictions and prolonged economic hardship in the occupied Palestinian territory and Lebanon. This emergency assistance programme reaches more than 1.4 million refugees annually. UNRWA will continue to provide such services, as necessary, as well as, on an exceptional basis and as a temporary measure, services to non-refugees currently displaced and in serious need of continued assistance, as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 2252 (ES-V) and most recently in its resolution 64/88.

21.7 UNRWA will also continue its efforts to mainstream gender and meet the needs of refugee children and vulnerable groups, and to develop further the Agency's protection, programming, operation and advocacy responses, thereby bringing UNRWA closer to fulfilling its obligations under relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, international human rights law, the Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other applicable international instruments.

21.8 UNRWA is almost entirely dependent on voluntary funding to implement its programmes. It has contended not only with chronic funding shortfalls, but also with acute funding uncertainties induced by economic and political volatility. The Agency will continue to seek the additional resources it needs to improve the quality of services it provides to the refugees, while maintaining cost-conscious management and the operational flexibility required to respond to unforeseen disruptions to lives and livelihoods in Palestine refugee communities.

Subprogramme 1
A long and healthy life

Objective of the Organization: to protect, preserve and promote the health status of Palestine refugees

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat	Indicators of achievement
(a) Universal access to quality, comprehensive primary health care	(a) Decrease in the antibiotic prescription rate
(b) Sustained protection and promotion of family health	(b) Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births) maintained
(c) Ensured prevention and control of diseases	(c) (i) Immunization coverage rate against vaccine-preventable diseases maintained
	(ii) Percentage of shelters connected to the public water network maintained
	(iii) Increase in percentage of shelters connected to the public sewage network

Strategy

21.9 The strategy in attaining the objective includes:

(a) Improving quality and efficiency of primary health-care services to achieve international standards in accordance with guidelines of the World Health Organization and the Millennium Development Goals;

(b) Focusing on preventive measures through the sharing and adoption of best practices, expansion of partnerships with stakeholders and, pending availability of financial resources, investment in capacity-building;

(c) Conducting systematic gender analysis, integrating a gender-responsive approach into services and designing interventions aiming at increased access to vulnerable groups and those with specific health needs;

(d) Sustaining acceptable environmental conditions in refugee camps, including adequate water supply, sewerage and drainage systems, either directly or in collaboration with municipal partners. This will be achieved through prevention and maintenance, namely, immunization against vaccine-preventable diseases, disease surveillance, outbreak investigation and tuberculosis control, and operation and maintenance of water and sanitation networks, either directly or in collaboration with municipal partners.

Subprogramme 2
Acquired knowledge and skills

Objective of the Organization: to meet the basic educational needs of Palestine refugees, in particular children and youth, and to improve their educational opportunities

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat	Indicators of achievement
(a) Universal access and coverage of basic education	(a) (i) Reduction in the dropout rate for pupils in the elementary education cycle (ii) Reduction in the dropout rate for pupils in the preparatory education cycle
(b) Educational quality and outcomes against set standards are enhanced	(b) Increase in the percentage change of the mean score obtained by students in Monitoring Learning Achievement

Strategy

21.10 The strategy in attaining the objective includes:

(a) Ensuring continued access to basic education opportunities for all children in the Agency's schools;

(b) Designing and implementing strategies and initiatives targeted to children with special educational needs and those at risk of dropping out;

(c) Fostering working relationships with host Ministries of Education and making greater use of partnerships with other service providers;

(d) Maintaining an environment conducive to learning by upgrading the quality of teachers, updating equipment, tools and teaching aids, and rehabilitating unsuitable school premises, to the extent that resources are available;

(e) Ensuring the maintenance of full gender parity in UNRWA schools;

(f) Analysing data on education outcomes collected through systemic testing and integrating findings into interventions targeted at underperforming schools and pupils;

(g) Taking opportunities for innovation and new approaches that will improve quality and access, including through greater efficiencies in programme delivery and improved school-community linkages.

Subprogramme 3
A decent standard of living

Objective of the Organization: to improve the standard of living and advance the rights of Palestine refugees through services provided to the poor and vulnerable

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat	Indicators of achievement
(a) Reduced poverty among the poorest Palestine refugees	(a) Increase in the proportion of abject poor in the UNRWA social safety net
(b) Inclusive financial services and access to credit and savings facilities are increased	(b) (i) Increase in the value of loans disbursed (ii) Increase in the number of loans disbursed
(c) Enhanced skills and improved access to employment for Palestine refugees	(c) Increase in the female and male employment rates for graduates within 12 months of graduation
(d) Sustained camp development and upgraded substandard infrastructure and accommodation	(d) Increase in the number of refugee families living in substandard shelters which have improved living conditions (excluding emergency shelters in Gaza)
(e) Rights of Palestine refugees are safeguarded and advanced	(e) (i) Increase in the percentage of UNRWA interventions on rights issues that prompted positive responses from the authorities (ii) Increase in the degree of compliance with UNRWA protection standards
(f) Strengthened capacity of refugees to formulate and implement sustainable social services in their communities	(f) Percentage of community-based organizations that improve their level of performance
(g) Palestine refugee registration and eligibility for UNRWA services are in accordance with relevant international standards	(g) Increase in the percentage of new inscriptions meeting UNRWA standards

Strategy

21.11 The strategy in attaining the objective includes:

(a) Adopting a poverty-based approach to improve targeting and coverage of the Agency's services, helping the poorest refugees meet their basic needs;

(b) Enhancing practices, strengthening partnerships and improving internal coordination of the Agency's social safety net and emergency programmes;

(c) Ensuring that gender- and rights-based activities are integrated into the Agency's interventions through mainstreaming and initiatives targeted at women, persons with disabilities, youth and other vulnerable groups;

(d) Building inclusive financial systems that are operationally self-sufficient and serve the most vulnerable, especially women, youth and the poor, by broadening the Agency's microfinance outreach and diversifying product range;

(e) Improving vocational and technical training to help refugees access productive and decent jobs through adaptation of courses to better meet labour market demands and more effective use of existing facilities;

(f) Rehabilitating critically substandard shelters, targeting the most vulnerable refugees as a priority, and focusing on bringing the worst shelters up to minimum standards. A two-fold approach will be adopted: integrating shelter rehabilitation within comprehensive camp improvement plans; and rehabilitating highest-priority shelters;

(g) Developing and reinforcing a network of contacts at all levels with relevant authorities and addressing these authorities on a systematic basis regarding specific violations of Palestine refugee rights;

(h) Bilateral and multilateral advocacy on behalf of Palestine refugees and for compliance with relevant aspects of international law;

(i) Strengthening institutional capacity of refugee-run organizations to promote and facilitate community-based action;

(j) Upholding relevant international standards in the registration and determination of eligibility for UNRWA services.

Legislative mandates

General Assembly resolutions

302 (IV)	Assistance to Palestine refugees
2252 (ES-V)	Humanitarian assistance
3331 (XXIX)	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
64/87	Assistance to Palestine refugees
64/88	Persons displaced as a result of the June 1967 and subsequent hostilities
64/89	Operations of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East